The Sun.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 1905.
Fair to-day; increasing cloudiness to-morrow; light west winds, becoming variable.

VOL. LXXII.—NO. 238. NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 1905.—Copyright, 1905, by The Sun Printing and Publishing Association. PRICE TWO CENTS.

HOW MUKDEN FELL.

First Complete Review of War's Greatest Battle.

JAPS' MASTERLY STRATEGY,

With Bravest of Troops to Obey Orders, Brought Victory.

Five Divisions of Oyama's Army Moved With Irresistible Force Into Positions Assigned, Despite the Vigorous Resistance of the Enemy and Handicaps of the Weather—Kuropatkin, Misled, as Planned by His Foe, by Attacks on His Left, Found Himself Outflanked by Nogi's Port Arthur Veterans on His Right—Retreating, He Left 30,000 Dead on the Field—Had 100,000 Wounded and Lost 50,000 Prisoners—Japanese Had 50,000 Casualties in 19 Days' Fighting—Combined Armies Numbered Fully 761,500 Men.

Special Cable Despatch to THE SUN.

LONDON, April 25.—The first comprehensive account of the battle of Mukden has just reached Europe. It is a clear, cold record furnished by the Japanese themselves of the greatest combat at arms in the world's history. It reveals a feat of combined intelligence and physical endurance, which, as the *Times* exclaims to-day, "commands our almost despairing admiration."

The account is prefaced by an outline of the Japanese chain of reasoning on which their campaign was based. Their strategy was concerned as much with subtle psychology as with the actual dispositions on the battlefield. What would Gen. Kuropatkin think, and how would he act in the conditions presented to him, were the problems first in view of the Japanese staff, and as the event proved they solved them accurately.

They contrived to give the Russian commander the impression that soldiers trained in Japan and accustomed to move among mountains would fail when fighting on the plains. The whole course of the campaign tended to confirm this estimate. The success of Kuropatkin's masterly retreat from Liaoyang seemed to prove it, for the Japanese failed to seize obvious advantages in the operations on the plains.

It does not seem to have occurred to Kuropatkin that the Japanese were deliberately fostering a delusion. Everything conspired to persuade the Russian staff that Field Marshal Oyama would move through the mountains on the east of Mukden instead of over the plains on the west.

HOW OYAMA PLANNED THE BATTLE.

That is precisely what the Japanese wished the Russians to infer, for their real plan was exactly the opposite. Their plan did, indeed, include a march upon Fushun from the south, but this was to be an attacking and containing maneuver rather than a turning one. The true outflanking movement was to be one to the west, sweeping up through the broad plains between the Hun and Liao rivers. It was to push as far as Sinmintung, thirty-three miles west of Mukden, and thence, turning east, to be directed against the city and the railway on the north, until finally in the region northward of Mukden it was to throw itself across the path of the Russians, who, meanwhile, would have been dislodged from their strongly entrenched central lines and forced back toward the city.

In short, the five Japanese armies were to form a crescent, whose cusps were over ninety miles apart. At first it would gradually draw together, the western cusp, however, being finally thrown forward so as to form a closed curve with the eastern. This stupendous conception involved the advance of 400,000 men over a front of nearly a hundred miles, and required that the movements of every unit of the five armies should be accurately coordinated.

A necessary element in the Japanese scheme was to divine the measures to which its development would provoke the enemy. It should be remembered that both sides had devoted long months of waiting in the valley of the Sha River to strenuous labors of fortification. The Russian lines stretched back upon tier upon tier of defenses, armed with over 1,300 guns, and forming south of Mukden a barrier that foreign experts pronounced impregnable. The Japanese position was scarcely less secure. That either army should dash itself against the other's entrenchments seemed unthinkable, but there was a difference. The Japanese had never failed to escalade successfully sooner or later any field fortifications constructed by the Russians. The Russians had invariably failed to carry any position fortified by the Japanese.

Therefore, while Oyama had no crippling fear that the wide extension of his wings would expose his center to any serious wedge driving process, he was quite prepared to attempt something of the sort on his own account—not to rush against the Russian lines in a state of undisturbed stability, but to rush if at any moment they should appear to be shaken by shocks against their flanks.

Meanwhile it was essential to devise some method of diverting the enemy's attention during the development of the flank movement, and Oyama's staff chose the railway. They appreciated the enormous importance Kuropatkin attached to the railway, so they determined upon a series of tremendous attacks to be delivered along the railway as though that were the route chosen for reaching Mukden. This sledgehammer work fell to Gen. Oku, whose troops had often shown themselves proficient in such tactics.

We have therefore to conceive this immense battlefield divided into five sectors, each army assigned from east to west under the following commanders: Kamamura, Kuroki, Nodzu, Oku and Nogi.

EASTERN FLANK DOES ITS PART.

The operations began in the eastern sector, according to design, suggesting this to be the main turning movement. When the troops took the field it was intensely cold, but not many days of assured frost remained and the necessity for utilizing the frozen rivers was imperative. The Japanese moved in two columns, the right taking the Tita road and the left moving toward Machuntun. The enemy's outposts were driven in, and the right column on Feb. 22, expelling from an intrenched position a regiment of Russian infantry, with a battery, began its march for Tita, while the left made preparations for storming the formidable defiles at Chinghocheng.

The latter operation entailed a severe struggle. The assailants attacked through a snowstorm which was so heavy that objects could not be distinguished at an arm's length. To reach the foot of the defiles the troops had to cross the Taitse River, and as a rise in the temperature had partially melted the ice the men's progress was much impeded. In face of these difficulties the utmost bravery failed to carry the troops up the precipitous slopes which were crowned by a whole division of the enemy with twenty field guns.

The attack was resumed at dawn on Feb. 24 after a night's bivouac in the snow. After twelve hours fierce fighting the Russians were finally expelled at sunset. They had about a thousand casualties.

Then the pursuit began, Oyama's main object being to cripple the enemy's army. He issued a general order that the pursuing operations be conducted with the utmost vigor. The Russians offered frequent resistance, and it was not until Feb. 28 that the two columns reached their first objectives, Machuntun and Tita.

There now began a struggle that lasted seven days. The Russians, more and more convinced that a great turning movement in the Fushun direction constituted the main feature of the Japanese plan, hastened to dispatch reenforcements. Their auxiliary railway on the south bank of the Hun River proved of good service. A large part of the general reserve, which consisted of a whole army corps, marched to Machuntun and Tita.

Thus disposing of their reserves the Russians unwittingly furthered the Japanese plan, which aimed at diverting the whole attention to the east. On the other hand the columns confronting Machuntun and Tita found that the Russians, far from yielding, showed signs of assuming the offensive.

No pen has yet undertaken to describe the hardships undergone by these Japanese soldiers during the whole week of such operations in midwinter and in face of frequent snowstorms. The men were of the finest type of Japanese seasoned soldiers of mature age, and they appeared to surmount all difficulties without flinching.

At last, on March 8, attacks in full force were delivered against both places. That at Machuntun succeeded, and before evening the Japanese were in full pursuit of the Russians, who retreated hurriedly toward Fushun, but at Tita twenty-one hours of continuous fighting was required before the Russians broke and fled northward. Their defeat was so crushing that they made no halt until they reached the highlands north of Fushun beyond the Hun River, where they rallied in entrenched positions.

The Japanese arrived on the southern bank of the Hun River after the fleeing enemy had crossed and found the ice would not bear them. This unlooked for impediment caused great embarrassment, but the difficulty was overcome, and the Fushun position was carried, the Russians retiring along the road to Tieling.

In this series of engagements the Japanese lost 3,800 men and the enemy's casualties were estimated to have been four times as many. The Russian forces consisted of three divisions and three regiments of infantry, with Rennenkampff's division of cavalry.

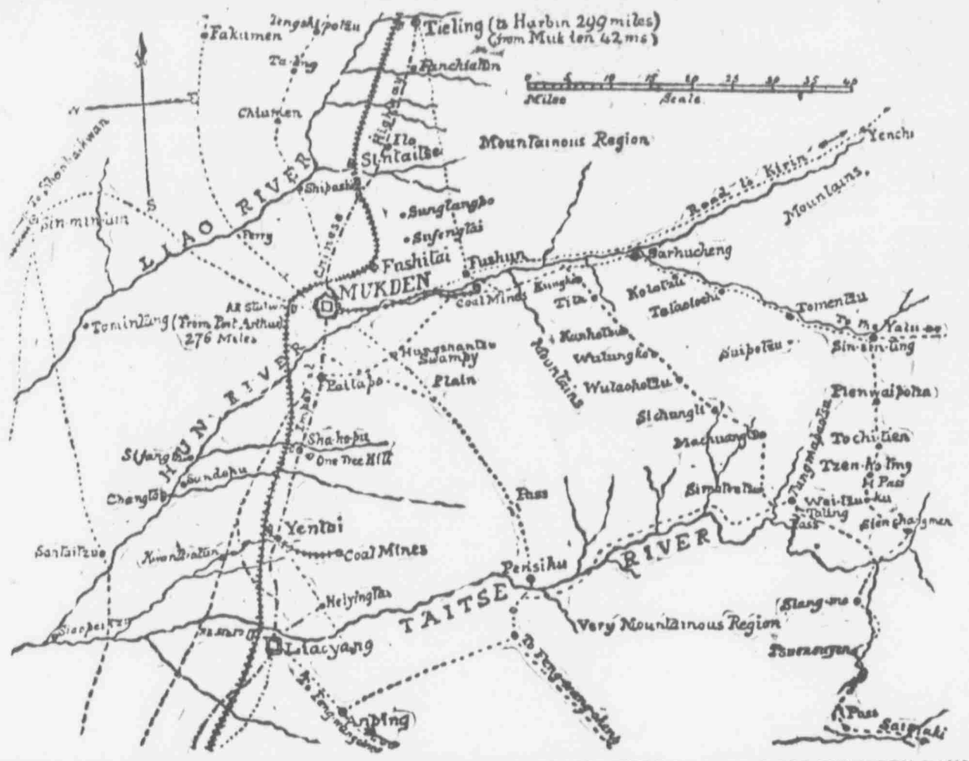
VALIANT WORK BY KUROKI'S FORCES.

Meanwhile much had happened elsewhere. The army in the east central sector, Kuroki's, began operations. Kuroki's immediate objectives were first, to break through the formidable plexus of works which guarded the approaches to the road leading northward toward the Hun River from Pensjhu, and, second, to beat back the Russians posted between the east central sector and the east sector—in other words, to effect a junction between his right and Kawamura's left, operating against Machuntun. By establishing itself along this line Kuroki's right would also gain access to the road leading north from Tautaokau to the banks of the Hun River, so that four Japanese columns would be able to move simultaneously in the east and east central sectors toward the Hun River east of Mukden.

It need scarcely be said that the attainment of the first objective was attended by extreme difficulties, the task being nothing less than to carry the eastern flank of a long line of Russian defenses in the valley of the Sha River, defenses upon which months of labor had been expended. One attack took place at night amid a snowstorm, but although the men suffered much from the cold and were blinded by the thickly falling flakes, the snow did a friendly service by outlining the positions of the Russian stake pits so that not one casualty resulted from them. The soldiers had bidden each other farewell before moving, and with the Japanese troops that ceremony means death or success. Their experience served them usefully in dealing with the wire entanglements, for instead of attempting to cut a passage as hitherto they employed balks of timbers as levers to pry these obstructions out of place.

This particular attack was one of many prefaced by an incident unhappily not novel where Russian troops are concerned. The enemy concentrated their fire on the field hospital on which the Red Cross flag was waving conspicuously, maintained their cannonade for some hours and killed a number of wounded.

On March 5 Kuroki's center and left had achieved their purpose. They had forced the left of the Sha River entrenchments and gained a footing beyond the river so as to take their place in the line of the general northward advance. Meanwhile his right had begun its northeastern extension, and carrying with no little pain a cluster of posts had been able to detach a strong column for establishing touch with the army in the east sector and for cooperation in the attack on Machuntun.



MUKDEN AND THE SURROUNDING DISTRICT WHERE 761,500 TROOPS WERE IN BATTLE FOR NINETEEN DAYS.

FIERCE ARTILLERY DUEL IN THE CENTER.

Until Feb. 27 the army in the central sector (Nodzu's), obedient to the general scheme of strategy, showed no sign of activity. Then suddenly on the morning of Feb. 27 this army, together with the left wing of the army in the east central sector, opened a furious cannonade all along the front. A powerful park of artillery, including many guns of position, had been quietly assembled, and whereas all through the winter under ineffectual but frequent gun practise on the Russian side the Japanese had kept silence, there now burst from the Japanese trenches a furious hail of projectiles.

The Russians, supposing this the prelude to a general attack rapidly massed three hundred guns to reply, and throughout the afternoon a tremendous artillery duel raged. It continued the two following days. The Japanese did not suffer severely, but had the satisfaction of putting many of the enemy's guns out of action and witnessing the piecemeal destruction of his fortifications.

On the third day the Russians reenforced their artillery with fifteen batteries of field pieces and four batteries of heavy guns, but the weight of the fire was still on the Japanese side.

During the first night after the opening of the fire the Russians made a gallant but strangely inadequate attempt against the left of the army in the central sector. After a concentrated artillery fire eight companies of infantry moved down on each side of the railway an hour before midnight and forced their way into the trenches of the Japanese outposts, where a fierce hand to hand encounter took place. The men of the outpost held their ground with dogged tenacity, and, being reenforced, drove out their assailants after a three hour combat. The Russians left sixty dead. They claimed a victory, but on what grounds the claim was based it is difficult to discover.

This incident, though exceptionally resolute in character, accorded with the general course of events. During the preceding months futile cannonading and petty, frivolous attacks had been typical of the Russian game of war. It seemed as though activity, however ineffectual, was a necessity to the soldiers of the Czar.

The sequel of this shattering cannonade was that the army of the central sector pushed the enemy from his last outworks south of the Sha River near Liuchwangtun and Wanpasohan, and having effected this between March 2 and March 6, it awaited the development of the turning attacks east and west.

It must be noted in considering these Japanese attacks that they took place at the close of the Manchurian winter, with the mercury averaging 5 to 10 degrees below. In such conditions it is out of the question for the attacking party to have recourse to entrenching. The pick and shovel are powerless against the iron hard ground. Nothing offered for entrenchments except the very inadequate substitute of sand bags. Each soldier carried one and it happened not infrequently that the men had to lie for hours on or under the snow behind these frail defenses while the enemy from his secure position poured shot and shell into them.

The idea suggests itself that the operations ought to have been advantageously postponed until the climatic conditions were more favorable, but a postponement would have created the serious impediment of unbridged rivers. The Japanese chose the interval between midwinter's almost unendurable cold and the opening of spring. They did not begin operations a moment too soon. The delay of a few days would have converted the Hun River from an ice road into a deep waterway. The troops in the center and west parts were only just in time to escape an obstacle which might have changed the whole complexion of the campaign.

OKU, APPARENTLY CHECKED, HAD DONE HIS WORK.

Meanwhile Gen. Oku, on Feb. 28, began his advance between the Sha and Hun rivers and beyond the west bank of the latter. Ever since the Heikautai combat the Russians had been entrenching various points in this district, probably with the view to renewing the offensive, for they asserted that although repulsed at Heikautai they had won positions valuable for a repetition of their turning movement at a more favorable season.

Thus, when Oku began his advance he was received by a cannonade from twenty-eight batteries. This happened on the east bank of the Hun River, south of Changtau. No progress could immediately be effected in face of this storm of shells. The Japanese had not only to suspend their advance, but also to receive that night a fierce counter attack, which they shook off with some effort. These were Oku's men, however, men who had never been beaten. The next day his army swept forward, overriding Changtau and reaching Wukiatzu and Choukwanpau on March 2. Thenceforth the rush continued, rolling the enemy back from Suhupau, where large quantities of arms and ammunition were captured. The Russians confronted his line from Likwanpase, by Shatasu and Machiapu, to Paitapu, the line extending from the southwest to the south of Mukden.

There this army threatened completely to outflank the Russians in the Sha River valley, but now from the night of March 6 Oku's progress was checked. The enemy had strengthened his position with tier upon tier of entrenchments and held them with a greatly superior force. Again and again Oku's attacks failed. Kuropatkin could now with truth report a successful repulse of the Japanese.

This very day saw the army in the east sector also still "held up" before Machuntun and Tita after assaults lasting seven days. In fact, at that moment Kuropatkin might also have congratulated himself, but in truth Oku's task was achieved. Desisting from further onsets he sat down to "contain" the Russians pending the development of the great western flanking operation which he now knew to be a success.

PORT ARTHUR VETERANS FLANK THE ENEMY.

Not until Feb. 27 did the west sector army appear in the field. Then suddenly it was found in the extreme southwesterly corner, far, but directly behind the position whence Oku's men were sweeping forward. Its right rested on Shwangshu and its left on Prenlima so that it lay between the Hun and Liao rivers.

A march of thirty miles in one day had brought it there. The Russian scouts might well be pardoned for failing to detect its presence, especially since to look for it they must have passed through Oku's lines. Nogi's forces, for it was the Port Arthur army, marched in echelon of columns, the left wing considerably in advance and covered by a screen of cavalry. Twenty miles were covered the second day and twenty-five on the third.

When on March 1 the cavalry van entered Sinmintung, thirty-three miles west of Mukden, no serious resistance had been encountered, nor was there anything to indicate that the enemy, though driven from Sufangtai, imagined themselves in touch with a new army. They seem to have mistaken the Port Arthur men for part of Oku's forces and the mistake was held until March 4, by which time Nogi's veterans had swung round so that their right came into line with Oku's left at Likwanpau and their left extended due north to Tashichino, fifteen miles west of Mukden on the Sinmintung road.

During the next two days they assisted Oku's attack against the enemy's positions southwest of Mukden, meanwhile pushing their own left still further north, and on March 7, keeping their right still pivoted on Likwanpau, they swung eastward in an arc shaped line with a frontal development of fifteen miles.

The fighting was now fierce, for not only were the Russians resisting vigorously at their intrenched positions northwest of Mukden, but they also sent a division with seventy guns which fruitlessly attempted to drive a wedge into Nogi's line.

Nothing could stop the Port Arthur battalions. They declared that this kind of work was a mere picnic compared with dashing against the stone and iron of a permanent fortress, and they knew, too, that the final issue of the great battle depended largely upon their success. On March 8 they carried position after position, Hsipokaitun, Pakiatzu and Sanchiatzu, finally reaching a strongly fortified line from Tapingchwan to the northern mausolea (Peilung). A detachment was now sent to wreck the railway north of Mukden, which was accomplished most completely.

KUROPATKIN FEELS COILS TIGHTENING AND RETREATS.

Already, however, the crisis of the titanic fight had come. Kuropatkin has not yet laid bare the workings of his mind in the supreme hour of his military career. Up to March 7 his reports were couched in an optimistic tone. He was capturing half a score of prisoners here, coming into possession of two or three machine guns there, and repulsing the enemy's assault everywhere.

On March 7, however, he seems to have realized that his intelligence had been concentrated on taking one of his adversary's pawns, while all the time the toils of a checkmate were closing round his own unconscious king. Even then he had not recognized that the troops operating against his right and rear were the Port Arthur army, but, at any rate, he saw that he was effectually outflanked.

The order to retreat was given, and the movement began on the night of March 7. The Japanese recognized the familiar symptoms at once. Kuroki was in full pursuit by midnight and Nodzu from 2 A. M., and before Kuropatkin reached the Hun River, where he hoped to make a determined stand, the Japanese were at his heels, forcing him across the river and never allowing him an instant to rally.

At 11 o'clock in the forenoon Oku, after desperate fighting, which cost the Russians 8,000 casualties, broke through the ring that so stoutly encircled the south and southwest of Mukden and from an attitude which for the moment had become almost defensive passed to one of vigorous pursuit.

Kamamura, renewing his vehement assaults against Machuntun and Tita, saw his stubborn foes fleeing at nightfall, and Nogi's men before noon were engaged in wrecking the railway north of Mukden.

The whole stupendous structure of the defense had fallen to pieces in an instant. It had been noted thrice during the first fifteen days that the Japanese assaults had been hampered by snowfalls. Once again, on March 9, the weather interfered in favor of the Russians. There arose a duststorm such as only those who have encountered the phenomenon in Manchuria can appreciate, a storm which obscures the sun, cuts exposed parts of the body like a whip, forces icy coldness through the thickest garments and renders even breathing difficult.

Such conditions suited disorganized flight rather than organized pursuit and probably mitigated the Russian disaster. It was heavy enough, however.

The Japanese closed in from all sides. The armies in the east and east central sectors swept the Russian left from the hills northward of Fushun. The center army crossed the Hun River and then, wheeling westward, formed with Nogi's army a gantlet through which the Russians, who had retreated before Oku's men on the west of Mukden, had to pass. These things happened on March 10, the last day of the great battle or series of battles, for the five armies had been engaged for nineteen days, fighting over a front of 100 miles.

THE LOSSES HEAVY.

The Russians left some 30,000 dead. They had over 100,000 wounded and lost 50,000 prisoners, with enormous quantities of foodstuffs and war material. The Japanese casualties totaled 50,000.

It had always been anticipated that if forced to fall back from Mukden the Russians would make another stand at Tieling, where they had constructed permanent fortifications and accumulated great stores, but that expectation had not imagined that the retreat would be in the nature of a rout. After the loss of over fifty per cent. of the whole army, to have stopped at Tieling would have been to invite final disaster. Kuropatkin, after a strong rearguard resistance, continued his flight and the Japanese, following close on his heels, entered Tieling on March 16.

761,500 MEN ENGAGED.

The forces engaged in this battle were three armies of Russians numbering 376 battalions of infantry, 171 batteries of artillery, 178 sotnias of cavalry, numbering 300,800 rifles, 34,000 gunners, with 1,368 guns, and 26,700 sabres, an aggregate of 361,500 men.

It is difficult to speak with accuracy of the Japanese numbers, which comprised sixteen divisions. A division may comprise anything from 10,000 to 30,000 men. It may be assumed that they averaged 25,000, making the Japanese arms 400,000. The total forces engaged stand at the enormous figure of 761,500.

Only four divisions were allotted to Nogi and four to Oku. Originally Oku commanded three divisions, but in view of the combined rôle of screening and attacking assigned to him, one division of the center army was drafted into his command. Thus no fewer than eight divisions, one-half of the whole Japanese army, operated against the Russian right.

Some peril is suggested by this distribution, the peril that Kuropatkin might have struck heavily at the Japanese center and driven a wedge between the two wings, but against this danger there were two safeguards, the first that the strength of the fortifications at the Japanese center were such as almost to defy attack, and the second that Nodzu commanded picked troops, who had earned the reputation of being invincible.

It cannot be said that Gen. Kuropatkin refrained altogether from offensive tactics against the Japanese center, but his attacks were ineffective and desultory and not calculated to impart even a sensible shock to Nodzu's divisions, and from the day the latter opened his terrible cannonade, under which Kuropatkin's fortifications crumbled away, the Russians probably thought little of attacking. Besides, from March 2 the center army itself assumed the offensive and though completely to force the positions opposite him at that stage was not in Nodzu's instructions he carried their outworks at more than one point and kept their defenders fully occupied.

As for Kuropatkin, he seems to have divided his time between Fushun and Mukden. It was his wings that troubled him, and there is nothing to show that he ever suspected the numerical weakness of the Japanese center.

WHERE JAPANESE CREDIT FALLS.

Military historians will wish to know to whom the credit for the fine strategical program of this battle should be assigned. The disposition of Englishmen would be to look for a Roberts or a Kitchener, and the inclination of European and American experts is to regard Tokio as the brain center.

Both are mistaken, especially the latter. By many Occidental writers Field Marshal Yamagata is spoken of as Japan's Von Moltke. By others Field Marshal Oyama is honored as the Wellington of his nation, but what Yamagata and Oyama represent is a sentiment—the sentiment of Satsuma and Choshu, respectively. There remains to Japan this relic of old times, that the two most renowned Samurai clans of the military age must furnish figureheads for every great enterprise of war.

The two Marshals are remarkable men, but to any one crediting them with strategical genius their own answer would be a laugh. If, on the other hand, the Japanese publicist were invited to assign praise for the recent victories, he would probably, after considerable hesitation, name Baron Kodama of the general staff. His hesitation would mean this: That he knows his countrymen's faith in many councillors. The major part of the applause certainly belongs to Kodama, but equally certain it is that a great number of officers had a hand in shaping the program. A wise suggestion from the youngest would receive as much deference as though it emanated from a senior. That is the Japanese habit. Only a few, perhaps, will be called conspicuously to the footlights when the curtain falls on this great drama, but many will have contributed to the result.

JAP SHIPS NEAR KAMRANH BAY.

May Be Going South to Intercept Third Russian Squadron.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

SAIGON, April 25.—Twenty Japanese warships passed Kamranh Bay on Sunday evening. They are supposed to be after the Russian fleet.

The Russians have captured two rice laden steamers bound for Japan.

Firing was heard again on Sunday morning at long intervals.

It is untrue that the crew of the interned Russian cruiser Diana have joined Admiral Rojestvensky's fleet. The French have taken the strictest precautions to guard both the men and the ship.

BANGHOI, Cochin-China, April 24 (via Hongkong, April 25).—A number of Russian cruisers are outside Kamranh Bay and two three-funneled ships are inside the harbor. It is believed that the Russian naval base has been transferred to Hainan Island.

KIAOCHAU, April 25.—The German cruiser Sperber sighted on Saturday in the Straits of Formosa several Japanese warships. One of them was in tow and appeared to be badly damaged. They were going northward.

BERLIN, April 25.—It is semi-officially stated that it is impossible that the cruiser Sperber sighted any Japanese warships as stated on April 22, as she was at Kiaochau from April 21 till April 24, when she sailed for Hongkong.

CHEFOO, April 25.—It is reported from Corea that Admiral Togo and the greater portion of the Japanese fleet were at Masampo, on the Corea Strait, last Thursday.

PARIS, April 25.—The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Matin* says that the General Staff of the navy denies that there has been any engagements in Far Eastern waters, as reported. It says that Admiral Rojestvensky, on leaving Kamranh Bay, went back as far as Java or Borneo, to effect a junction with Admiral Niebogatoff, who was within three or four days sail.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Echo de Paris* telegraphs that a well informed authority states that Niebogatoff probably effected a junction with Rojestvensky on Sunday or yesterday. The Admiralty at St. Petersburg refuses to give the slightest information.

LONDON, April 26.—The Tokio correspondent of the *Telegraph* says that during the latter stage of the recent neutrality crisis Great Britain intimated her intention of supporting Japan. The British warships left Hongkong on April 19 at full speed for Kamranh Bay.

It is expected that Rear Admiral Niebogatoff will ship supplies in Dutch waters.

All the reports concerning the movements of Admiral Rojestvensky, Rear Admiral Niebogatoff and Admiral Togo are merely guesswork. It is reported from Tokio that Rojestvensky has gone to Tonken Bay. There are no reliable reports to indicate the whereabouts of Niebogatoff. A telegram from Tsintau states that he has not yet joined Rojestvensky, but it does not seem likely that this correspondent is any better informed than the one who sends a St. Petersburg rumor that they have already met. According to a despatch to the *Daily Mail*, dated April 24, a number of Russian cruisers have arrived outside of Kamranh Bay. Two are still inside.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Telegraph* reports that the difficulties between France and Japan occasioned by Rojestvensky's stay at Kamranh Bay are not yet settled. He adds that serious complications seem likely to mark the closing phase of the campaign.

As regards the land campaign, a Berlin newspaper says that private news shows that the Japanese are preparing big turning movements against both Russian flanks. An immediate resumption of the fighting is impending, with much more favorable prospects of a conclusive Japanese victory than at Mukden or Liaoyang.

VLADIVOSTOK THREATENED.

Japs Said to Be Pouring Into the Sungari Valley—Kuropatkin Out Again.

Special Cable Despatch to THE SUN.

LONDON, April 26.—The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Times* says that private advices state that the Japanese have left merely a screen in front of Gen. Linievitch while pouring their main forces along the eastern mountain passes into the valley of the Sungari River toward Kirin and Ninguta, their ultimate plan being completely to isolate Vladivostok. Meanwhile bands of chunchuses are creating a diversion on the Russian right.

If this is correct, it is believed that Gen. Linievitch will decide voluntarily to attempt the offensive in order to save Vladivostok. It is reported that Gen. Kuropatkin disagreed with Gen. Linievitch regarding the advisability of such a step and resigned his command, which was given to Gen. Kaultars.

CHIEF KILLED AT BANK FIRE.

EAST SIDE BRANCH OF VAN NORDEN TRUST CO. BURNED OUT.

Lively Scramble to Save Funds and Books at Blaze in Which Old Ridley Store on Grand St. Was Destroyed—Huge Crowd—Girls Climb Down Fire Escapes

What was left of the old Ridley store building on the south side of Grand street and the west side of Orchard street went up in a five alarm blaze which began about half past 5 o'clock last night.

In the building were the offices of the East Side branch of the Van Norden Trust Company, and the fire broke out on the second floor, just over them. Acting Battalion Chief W. J. Wieland fell from a ladder and sustained injuries from which he died later.

The fire was a hot one from the very start. The moment the alarm was given the Van Norden people, who were still in the building, threw what cash and securities were still outside the fireproof vaults inside the doors and locked them up. The exchanges were sent uptown to the main office of the company, at Fifth avenue and Sixtieth street. Then some of the books were carried across the street into the offices of the Mutual Alliance Trust Company on the opposite corner.

As the fire grew there was a hot time in the Mutual Alliance Trust Company's place, only comparable to the more material blaze across the street. F. H. Koelsch, the assistant secretary of the company, was for getting everything inflammable out of the place. Chief Croker ran in and told him to get out and be quick about it.

"And leave everything? My books? My money? It's nonsense!" yelled Mr. Koelsch.

"Outside for you! Go! This place may start up any minute!" shouted the Chief.

Koelsch refused to budge. Chief Croker went out and found Inspector Max Schmittberger and announced that he left Koelsch and his men to the care of the police. Koelsch's first reply to Schmittberger was to send A. Afenbein, the cashier and two clerks with a chemical extinguisher to the second floor with instructions to see to it that the flames which were leaping from the burning building should not cross the street. The inspector at last got them out by furnishing two of his men to escort a company of bank clerks laden with leather satchels full of cash to the Corn Exchange Bank's branch at Norfolk street.

The inspector thought for a minute he might have to enforce even this concession by force. But a series of terrific explosions in the Ridley building, which shook the ground like dynamite blasts were more persuasive than all his eloquence.

The Ridley store went out of business several years ago and the property was given over to small concerns. Beside the Van Norden Trust Company, there were in the building, two synagogues, a dentists' supply company, a loan association, a furniture store and a lot of minor enterprises. The loss was estimated by Chief Croker at $200,000.

The blaze was one of the sort that sends out great smoky streamers of flame far beyond the sidewalk line and makes the street hot for blocks either way. It happened that Inspector Schmittberger was having a meeting of the police captains of his district at the Eldridge street station, and as soon as it became apparent that the fire was serious he turned them all out to help in maintaining fire lines. This was foresighted, for at that hour the East Side streets fairly boil with humanity anyway, and everybody seemed to want to get near enough to the flames to scorch his garments. It took 150 policemen, all the reserves south of Forty-second street, to hold back the crowd. The police fairly had to fight to keep the people to Eldridge and Ludlow streets on Grand street, and a block north and south on Orchard and Allen streets. Mounted policemen came over from the Bowery, and by making a great demonstration of willingness to trample the populace under foot, finally got the crowds to make room for the firemen to do their work.

Policeman Stobe, who discovered the fire, as soon as he had sent in the alarm went through the factory building on the south of the Ridley building, driving out the 300 girls who were at work there in an underwear factory. Many scrambled down the fire escapes to the accompaniment of shrieks and cheers from the crowds below.

The firemen found the flames eating through into the upper floors of the building and spreading westward into Rosen's furniture store. The second and third alarms were turned in almost immediately. Chief Croker found, however, that while there had been plenty of water for the first companies, the pressure was not adequate to feed the additional engines and none of them could raise a stream to the upper floors.

The cause of the explosions could not be learned, but it was rumored that four cans of benzine were stored in a closet in one of the factories. The heat of the blaze was so intense that the fancy glass portico over the entrance of the deceased Federal Bank of unhallowed memory, on the northwest corner, was cracked and fell to the street in great chunks.

After the fire was pretty well out Acting Battalion Chief W. J. Wieland of the Fourth Battalion went up a ladder to get into the synagogues which were at the west end of the Grand street front of the burned building. They were full of smoke, though they were not directly touched by the flames. The chief was followed by his driver, Casimir Woodzicki. When they were half way up the ladder it slipped across the sidewalk, caught and bucked. Both men were shot up into the air. The acting chief fell upon a sofa which had fallen out of the furniture store front and broke three ribs. He was attended by Coroner Scholer and was sent, unconscious, to Gouverneur Hospital. He died there at about 11:15 o'clock last night. Woodzicki came down flat on the sidewalk and went back up the ladder.

Midway in the fire an alarm came from 51 Orchard street, three doors from the Ridley building. One family of the many living in the house had run out leaving a pan of fat on the kitchen stove. It boiled over and set fire to the kitchen. The men of

Latest Marine Intelligence.

Arrived: SS Athalie, Seville, April 5.